

Asheville Area Riverfront Redevelopment Commission Meeting

November 13, 2014

Asheville Area Chamber of Commerce

Member attendees: Chair Pattiy Torno; Vice Chair Stephanie Brown; Asheville City Councilman Jan Davis; Buncombe County Commissioner David King; Woodfin Mayor Jerry Vebaun; Pam Turner; Peter Sprague; Karl Koon; George Morosani; Ricky Silver; Joe Ferikes; Carleton Collins; Esther Cartwright

Absent from meeting: Cindy Weeks

Staff: Stephanie Monson; Sam Powers; Dan Baechtold; Nikki Reid; Alan Glines; Caroline Long

Chair Pattiy Torno opened the meeting at 4:02 pm.

ADMINISTRATION:

The meeting has a quorum.

The October meeting minutes were approved unanimously.

UPDATES:

Nominating Committee

The Committee recommended Pattiy Torno as Chair and Carleton Collins as vice chair for upcoming year.

Jerry made a motion to accept the recommended slate of Pattiy Torno and Carleton Collins. Ricky Silver seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously. The official vote will take place in December.

Rules Committee

AARRC is seeking Planning & Design Review Committee applicants through Friday, November 21st. After that date, the nominating committee will look at applications and share the top candidates at the December meeting. The AARRC will choose from the candidates at that meeting.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

2014 Annual Report

The report will be 8 pages this year, rather than 4 like last year. There will be a letter from the Chair, in addition to a new layout.

2015 Goals: Chair Torno asked if there was anything to add which was not included in the draft version. The Commissioners changed the language on several 2015 Goals, and added emphasis on connecting the River to all areas of the City.

The Commissioners added a focus on adaptive reuse of 14 Riverside Drive to the 2015 Priorities section.

NEW BUSINESS:

Design Review: River Mill Lofts, Carleton Collins and Clay Mooney presented.

1. George Morosani requested for a motion to recuse himself, as he is the owner of the property. Jan moved to recuse him and Jerry seconded the motion with all in favor. George heard the comments but did not deliberate or vote.
2. Carleton Collins requested for a motion to recuse himself, as he is a member of the design team. Jerry moved to recuse him and Karl seconded the motion with all in favor. Carleton stayed and presented but did not deliberate or vote.
3. Jan Davis requested for a motion to recuse himself, as he will be voting on a conditional use permit for the same project next month, and wished to avoid ex parte communication. Stephanie Brown moved to recuse him and Pam Turner seconded the motion with all in favor. Concilman Davis left the meeting and did not return.

Staff member Stephanie Monson Dahl reported on the project, noting that the project is located in the Swannanoa River corridor at the corner of Thompson Street and Stoner Road. The property is zoned Urban Place, and is encouraged to utilize dense mixed use. She noted that the site plan is in alignment with the Wilma Dykeman Riverway Master Plan and promotes connection to future projects as part of the Plan.

The Planning and Design Review Committee recommends the Asheville Area Riverfront Redevelopment Commission vote to approve the project's design, as it meets the intent and spirit of the River District Design Review Guidelines.

Carleton Collins and Clay Mooney of the design team presented the project, detailing the site, location, amenities, materials, landscaping, storm water detention, and roadway plans. He noted that the design team has requested three variances on this project, including: a modification of setback, modification reducing sidewalk width along Stoner Road, and a variance reducing the Urban Place requirement of an entrance every 60 feet.

Karl Koon noted that the Planning and Zoning commission approved the plan on the condition that they not use a 10 foot high retaining wall but rather have a series of stepped walls or other articulated feature.

Matt Sprouse stated that this project helped the Planning and Design Review Committee to visualize how larger projects will develop in this area. He noted the architects have already made significant improvements to the plan since the project came before the Committee last week.

Chair Torno called for a motion to approve the River Mill Loft Project's design, as it meets the intent and spirit of the River District Design Review guidelines. David King made the motion and Stephanie Brown seconded the motion. Approved unanimously.

Chair Torno called for a motion to support the variance from Planning and Zoning regarding openings and entrances on Thompson Street, to modify the front setback from 15 to up to 35 feet, to modify the sidewalk width on Stoner Road, and to recommend that Council consider

affordable housing requirement within this project. Ricky Silver made the motion and Jerry Vehaun seconded the motion. Approved unanimously.

RADTIP Update: Dan Baechtold, Transportation Planner for COA and Rajit Ramkumar, a consultant with CDM Smith presented

Their presentation focused on four main areas:

1. Craven Street Bridge improvements to allow New Belgium truck traffic to be able to cross and move north and south on Riverside Drive, and to add full bicycle and pedestrian facilities to the bridge. Options include widening the current bridge (~\$4 million) or building a second span to the north (~\$2.5 million). Roundabouts at the intersection of Craven & Riverside Drive were explored., but a signaled intersection has been deemed a better alternative here.
2. Amboy Road Bridge has been identified as deficient for pedestrian & multi modal transportation. One option is a second span, for non-auto traffic only, in the shadow of and to the north of the current bridge (~\$1.5 million). A second option is a signature bridge in the same location or further down stream across from 191 Lyman Street (at least 10 to 15 times the cost of option #1). Option #3 is to wait and let the NCDOT replace the Amboy Road Bridge as they see fit. Currently this project has a TIP # but is currently unfunded.
3. Norfolk Southern Trestle Bridge substructure on Riverside Drive has been 3-D modeled and some core samples taken. So far no hindrances have shown up that would prohibit the lowering of the roadbed ~ 3 feet to allow for a full size truck to be able to pass underneath.
4. Asheville on Bikes / Councilman Hunt has asked that the possibility of protected bike lanes be explored for the RAD TIP project. While protected bike lanes may be physically possible, any changes to the cross section of Riverside Dr and Lyman St that increases the right-of-way impacts and natural environment impacts will result in coordination with Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) and revisiting the approved environmental document. The potential delays associated with agency coordination is expected to delay overall project schedule and possibly TIGER VI grant schedule. .

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Chair Torno noted that there was a fundraiser for Greenway Glow at the Mill Room tonight from 6 to 9pm benefitting Friends of Connect Buncombe.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Richard Cary commented that it is very important to make sure the Craven Street improvement project is successful, and that the quality of the improvement matches the quality of New Belgium's project.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:42pm.